

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Legends of a Star

Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives: The student will:

- Explain some of the legendary stories of Texas and its heroes
- Complete the labeling of a map of Texas to show where legends began
- Analyze or determine if the legends have any percentage of truth
- Focus on a critical document to reassess ideas on legends

Time: 1½ class periods

Materials: Document: **1836** *Address of Stephen F. Austin*

Exercises: *Legends of a Lone Star State*
Texas Map Study

Resources: *Map of Texas*

Desks or chairs grouped in sets of five (5) or six (6)
Map study

Procedures:

Setting the Stage

The many stories about Texas and its early history have made good movies and great legends. But do they tell the real story of the conflicts that arose in the new territory? Do the many stories of Texas and its independence reveal a plan by the United States to re-gain the lands from Mexico through annexation or was Texas really a “lone” republic seeking recognition from any country that would accept its vision?

In this lesson, students will research the legendary origins of Texas and share the stories in a Final Word activity. (There are many websites, some authored by the State of Texas itself, recounting these legends.) Students will also use a map study to orient themselves to Texas locals and then be asked to assess Stephen Austin’s address in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1836.

These completed documents will be used again in another lesson, *Don’t Mess with Texas*, to record the “real” historical version of events.

Procedures: Day One

*Prior to the class, assign the Exercise sheet, **Legends of the Lone Star State**, so students gather beforehand their stories on Texas and the characters of these legends.*

- 1.** Distribute the blank map of Texas to each student at the beginning of class and ask the students to follow the directions and label the items from the *Texas Map Study*. Have the maps numbered 1–5 or 1–6, as this will indicate the group they will go to for discussion. They should take the maps with them to help understand place and time.
- 2.** Move chairs or desks into a small circle and have the students move to their assigned group. Give each person in the group a chance to report their findings about the people, places, and events from *Legends of the Lone Star*. Have the group pick a facilitator and a timekeeper.
- 3.** Starting with the first item on the list, **Student No. 1** will recount what he or she learned about the legends of Sam Houston. Student 1 must finish in no longer than three (3) minutes.
- 4.** The discussion then moves clockwise around the circle with each remaining student responding to what the first student explained in *less than one minute*.
- 5.** When the discussion returns to Student No. 1, he or she has the final word—giving his or her reaction to what was presented by the other students in the circle.
- 6.** The process begins again with **Student No. 2** who will explain what he has learned about the next item (the legends of Moses Austin) in less than three minutes.
- 7.** Repeat the circle discussion procedure, returning to the second student for the final word on what was presented.
- 8.** Continue rotating student presenters until all items on the sheet have been given the final word.
- 9.** Now hold a class discussion incorporating ideas from all the groups in the class about any of the items on the Legends' list or through the process of the final word.
- 10.** Give the students *Stephen Austin's Speech*. Ask them to highlight anything of interest and list any feelings they have as they read this document for homework. (This document will be used again in the lesson *Don't Mess with Texas*, so be sure it has been read.)

Day Two Procedures

- 1.** Ask students to get out their copy of Stephen Austin's speech and a sheet of blank notebook paper.
- 2.** Ask students to reflect on the stories they discussed in comparison to this address from Austin. They should respond in writing to either of these prompts:
 - a.** Does the reading of Austin's message change any of your thinking about Texas and its legends?
 - b.** Is there evidence in Austin's message that indicates strong political, social or philosophical ties to the United States?
- 3.** Collect their papers and/or have some read on a volunteer basis. Teachers may record on the board which students answered question "a" or "b" and some of the points of analysis used in the reflections.

Extension Activities:

- 1.** This lesson will lead into the lesson *Don't Mess with Texas*.
- 2.** Students could dramatize the legends.
- 3.** Students could find appropriate music to play to represent any of the items on the legends' list. ■